

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 32-43. The claims are as follows:

1-4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously presented) A method for managing contract data, comprising:

receiving a contract datagroup D_G by a decentralized execution system (DES) from a procurement contract management system (PCMS) over a data path within a computer network, said contract datagroup D_G selected from the group consisting of a contract dataset and a contract deltadataset, said contract datagroup D_G identifying N purchase items purchasable from a vendor V keyed to the contract datagroup D_G , said N being an integer of at least 2, said contract datagroup D_G identifying the vendor V if the contract datagroup D_G is the contract dataset, said DES comprising a relational database that includes contract datasets, vendor datasets having vendors, and purchase item datasets having purchase items;

determining which, if any, of the N purchase items identified in the contract datagroup D_G match a purchase item in the purchase item datasets and determining a total number K of such purchase items in D_G that do not so match a purchase item in the purchase item datasets, said K being an integer satisfying $0 \leq K < N$;

if the contract datagroup D_G is the contract dataset then determining that the vendor V matches a vendor in the vendor datasets and adding a subset of D_G to the relational database, said subset of D_G excluding the K purchase items from D_G ;

if the contract datagroup D_G is the contract deltadataset then adding to the first contract

dataset in the relational database R purchase items of D_G , wherein D_G is keyed to a first contract dataset in the relational database, and wherein the R purchase items of D_G consist of all purchase items of D_G exclusive of the K purchase items of D_G .

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the DES further comprises a special database that includes contract datasets, wherein the contract datagroup D_G is the contract deltadataset, and wherein $K > 0$ and said method further comprises:

if D_G is keyed to a first contract dataset in the special database, then adding to the first contract dataset in the special database the K purchase items of D_G ; and

if D_G is not keyed to any contract dataset in the special database, then forming from D_G a contract dataset D_{CI} that includes the K purchase items and excludes the R purchase items, and adding D_{CI} to the special database.

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the contract datagroup D_G is the contract dataset and the vendor V does not match a vendor in the vendor datasets, then further comprising adding a vendor dataset D_V to the relational database when a contract based on the subset of D_G is required at the DES, said vendor dataset D_V keyed to the vendor V.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein adding D_V to the relational database comprises extracting D_V from a vendor database prior to adding D_V to the relational database.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein adding D_V to the relational database

comprises:

communicating a message to a DES buyer keyed to at least one purchase item of the R purchase items, each of said at least one purchase item matching a purchase item in the purchase item datasets, said message relating to adding D_V to the relational database; and

having the DES buyer cause D_V to be added to the relational database when the contract based on the subset of D_G is required at the DES.

10. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the contract datagroup D_G is the contract dataset.

11. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the contract datagroup D_G is the contract deltadataset.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, said PCMS being a systems applications and products (SAP) system, said DES being a SAP system, said relational database being a SAP database.

13. (Previously presented) A method for managing contract data, comprising:

receiving a contract dataset D_C by a decentralized execution system (DES) from a procurement contract management system (PCMS) over a data path within a computer network, said contract dataset D_C identifying a vendor V and N purchase items purchasable from the vendor V, said N being an integer of at least 1, said DES comprising a relational database that includes contract datasets, vendor datasets having vendors, and purchase item datasets having

purchase items, said DES further comprising a special database that includes contract datasets;

determining which, if any, of the N purchase items identified in the contract dataset D_C match a purchase item in the purchase item datasets and determining a total number K of such purchase items in D_C that do not so match a purchase item in the purchase item datasets, said K being an integer satisfying $0 < K \leq N$;

if $K = N$ then adding D_C to the special database;

if $K < N$ then determining that the vendor V matches a vendor in the vendor datasets and adding a first subset of D_C to the relational database and if $K > 0$ adding a second subset of D_C to the contract datasets of the special database, said first subset of D_C excluding the K purchase items from D_C , said second subset of D_C excluding R purchase items from D_C , wherein the R purchase items of D_C consist of all purchase items of D_C exclusive of the K purchase items of D_C .

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

adding a new purchase item to the purchase item datasets;

determining whether the new purchase item is identified in a contract dataset D_{CS} of the special database; and

if the new purchase item is so identified in D_{CS} and D_{CS} identifies J purchase items such that J is an integer of at least 1, then determining whether a vendor identified in D_{CS} matches a vendor in the vendor datasets and if the vendor identified in D_{CS} so matches a vendor in the vendor datasets then:

if a contract identifier of D_{CS} matches a contract identifier of a first contract dataset in the relational database then adding the new purchase item to the first contract

dataset, else

if the contract identifier of D_{CS} does not matches a contract identifier of any contract dataset in the relational database then adding a subset of D_{CS} to the relational database, said subset of D_{CS} including the new purchase item; and

if $J = 1$ then deleting D_{CS} from the special database else deleting the new purchase item from D_{CS} .

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising extracting the new purchase item from a purchase item database prior to adding the new purchase item to the purchase item datasets.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13, said PCMS being a systems applications and products (SAP) system, said DES being a SAP system, said relational database being a SAP database, said special database being a non-SAP database.

17-21. (Canceled).

22-27. (Cancelled)

28-31. (Canceled)

32-43. (Canceled)

44-48. (Canceled)

49-54. (Cancelled)

55. (Canceled)